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joking enquiries about whether we were getting enough Buddhist and Burmese teaching for we were attending English Christian schools at the time.

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The monks have lost all touch with the schooling of the great majority of children by now. In the first decade of the century the monastic schools were still the backbone of instruction for boys throughout all the rural districts, being responsible for the high literacy figure of 49% for Burman males, as compared with 11.9% in Madras at the time. But lay schools, either established and run on Burman lines, or established by Christian missionary societies with perhaps grants-in-aid, or under the direct management of Government or a committee acting on behalf of the government, were springing up on all sides, until by 1934 the proportion of lay to recognized monastic schools for vernacular education was about five to one. Although there had been attempts to raise the utilitarian value of monastic education by the encouragement of such subjects as arithmetic, geography and land surveying, it was far easier for the lay schools to conform to the standards set by the Board of Examiners. With the passing of such standards becoming the means of obtaining employment and the changing of fashions, more and more children went to the lay schools. Moreover, the lay schools included schools for girls, either separately or in common with boys.

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In my childhood there were still echoes of the opposition between monastic and secular education. In about 1922 my Uncle Pyant, who was then a serious student at the University, told me the world was round, "but", he added, "the hpongyis say that this is not true and most elder people don't believe it." My husband also tells me that when he went home from his government school with the statement that the earth spun around on its axis and took twenty-four hours to do it, the elders were most scornful. "In that case," they said, "if you were to go up into the air and stay there for some time, you could not come down to Kengtung until the same time the next day, but might land in England for your lunch."

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Another difference between old and new ideas of education was that the elder people were aghast at the long years which a modern education from primary schools to University lasted. They felt that at least one must have learnt everything there was to learn by then, for a few years at a monastery taught a boy all the reading, writing, calculation and literature which any grown man was expected to know. Once my grandfather received a telegram announcing the birth of a grandson; the message contained the additional information that the doctors had found it necessary to perform a circumcision on the infant. The telegram was in English, according to the rules of the Posts and Telegraphs in Burma,

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1: Mi Mi Khaing I-5 (no date) 1946 AP1 Burma
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houses did likewise and the procession collected more girls as it passed 796
each house on its way towards the zayats. Behind the girls, the young lads of the village followed with empty tins and buckets, to go and draw water with which to bathe the images of the Buddha, and then the bath-water for the old folk in the zayat. The procession always looked very gay, for the girls wore stout bright cotton prints instead of the usual white muslin jackets, so that the wet clinging clothes after a splashing would not make immodest figures of them. As this procession passed, not even the naughtiest urchin would dare to splash them as long as they headed in the direction of the monastery. Arrived at their destination, the young people served the meal to the elders, drew the water and washed the images, filled the jars with bathwater for their grandmothers, ate their own meal from the pooled remains of what they had brought, and then started uproarious fun. The young men had the advantage of their buckets, but the girls had the advantage of being able to use guile by affecting fear and helplessness until they could turn the buckets round on their pursuers. After this they went in search of the new branches, the equavalent, in Ye, of the *padauk* flowers which boys and girls in other parts of Burma were plucking.

The padauk is the *pterocarpus indica*, a tall tree growing in the mixed 796
dry forests of Burma and giving a rich red wood which is much used in 137
the making of bullock carts. It is also a beautiful flowering tree, whose 132
bright yellow blossoms are always associated with the freshness of the 821.0
New Year festivities, for it flowers at this time and its branches are cut down and dragged into houses with drops of water lighting up the golden

796 yellow flowers against the rich dark green leaves, either water from the
137 water throwers or the *tha-gyan mo*, the thingyan showers. Light showers
132 usually fall about this time although the monsoon is far off yet; they come
821 from a small low pressure area over the land although when we were
young it seemed to be part of what the true tha-gyan sa leaflets should promise, a foretaste of the coolness of the real monsoon, and a recognition of Tha-gya Min's presence. If the rain was late in falling, the villagers set to work to hurry it on. The rain spirits live in the stars but they sometimes come out to play with each other in the space of the firmament. Then rain falls on the earth. But at other times, when the sun is not in the right quarter, they stay indoors and the earth receives only the scorching heat of the sun. Men can then rouse the rain spirits to show more energy and come out, by the beating of tin cans and by exerting energy themselves in a tug-of-war. In Ye, the upper street and the lower street used to put up teams for this and tugging was carried on amidst betting and cheering and the beating of empty kerosene tins by women and children around.

796 The girls and youths from the monastery returned at about noon,
262 wet and happy and dragging the branches of *ngu* along. Throughout the day the children ran into the street to pour water on passers-by; bullock carts went by, decorated with ngu branches and holding music and water parties of young men and girls, the young men richly painted and dancing in the open carts; rival teams drew up and staged water-fights in the street or went to besiege houses where beautiful girls with a reputation for coldness or coyness were hiding. Throughout the day, also, dishes of sweetmeats arrived, for each house does the good act of making a comestible in large quantities for distribution. Ours was made on the second day and was a Moulmein speciality for which my mother had the best talent. This *tha-gyan hta-min*, thingyan rice, sounds insipid when described as boiled rice, eaten floating in cold water which has been made fragrant, to the accompaniment of green mango salad and saltfish shredded and fried crisp. To us, of course, it is delicious. The water has received an infusion of the aroma from an earthen pot which is turned upside down over the burning of tallow and fragrant woods. The rice is not the moist steamy rice of meal times but has been drained after cooking, on tray-sieves of cane, and the grains lie clear and separate and whole. The delight of eating thingyan rice in the hot weather is indescribable to foreigners, perhaps even to all non-Moulmein people, eating it in wide china bowls, with china spoons, alternating the concentration of sour and salt tastes of mango and saltfish with the coolness and cleanness of the rice and its water. We could eat this throughout the day; being thingyan rice it carried a blessedness which made us immune

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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414. WATER-THROWING AT NEW-YEAR.

Party feeling, which often runs high between the quarters of a village, with their rival *kyaung* and *zedi*, finds an outlet at *Tagú* in the tug-of-war (*lun-swè*). As the superstitious whistle for the wind, so do they expect to tug in the monsoon by this means, at the season when everything is panting for rain.

After *Tagú*, the next festival season is *Wdzó*—in June—the commencement of the Buddhist Lent. This season is signalised by the *Shinláung fêtes*, described in Chapter III. During Lent there is no regular festival.

The great festival of *Thadîndyút* celebrates the close of Lent. It falls in October, when the rains are generally over, and is the one for which the most extensive preparations are made. Every festival is signalised by the offerings made to the *yahán*. But now they are literally "poured" in profusion, as the word implies (*sun-láung*). *Yazamá*—paths fenced with bamboo trellis, such as those prepared for the progress of royalty—are got ready along the chief thoroughfare. Through these on the morning of the great day the *yahán* defile in endless procession. As many as a thousand *yahán* may be invited to receive the *Thadîndyút* offerings in a large town. The offerings are poured into the alms-bowls by the laity; scholars are stationed at intervals to relieve the *yahán* of their loads of offerings. After the *yahán* come *pôthudaw* and *mèthilá*. Both ends of the *yazamá* are decorated with arches of bamboo and tinsel. About these are grouped life-size figures of mythical import—dragons to guard the entrance, princes and princesses of the *nats* to take part in the honour done to the *Thingâ* (No. 131). In the evenings fire-

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415. KANDOW PROCESSION AT NEW-YEAR.